

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0035] with the following amended paragraph:

[0035] Figs. 6, 7, and 14 show further details of back support 17 and a sliding seat mechanism 18A in one embodiment of the invention. Back support 17 is pivotally attached to sliding seat mechanism 18A. Specifically, back support 17 is attached to a back support base 16 (also shown in Figs. 3 and 4) by hinges 43A (also shown in Fig. 5). Back support base 16 and seat 18 are mounted onto a bracket 44 that fits around base 12. Bracket 44 can be made out a metal plate shaped to slide over ~~leg support~~ base 12. Base 12 includes one or more rows of holes 54 (also shown in Figs. 3 and 4) along its sides where one or more locking pins 37 can secure bracket 44 to base 12. This allows the location of back support 17 and sliding seat mechanism 18A to be slidably adjusted along base 12 for the user. Armrests 19 are mounted to the sides of bracket 44. Armrests 19 can be raised or lowered and then locked into position by nuts and bolts 19A (also shown in Fig. 4). This allows each user to be seated comfortably in stretching apparatus 10. Alternatively, back support 17 can be pivotally attached to base 12 to provide a non-slidable back rest.

Please replace paragraph [0045] with the following amended paragraph:

[0045] Figs. 12 and 13 show further details of sliding knee mechanism 62 in one embodiment of the invention. Mechanism 62 includes a bracket 30 that fits around leg support 21, and a knee strap 20 (e.g., a hook-and-loop type) that loops through slots 66 in bracket 30. Bracket 30 can be made out a metal plate shaped to slide over leg support 21. Bracket 30 allows the position of mechanism 62 to be slidably adjusted along leg support 21. A locking pin 37 (Figs. 5 and 13) is passed through a hole ~~[[of]]~~ in bracket 30 and one of the holes 58 positioned on the side of leg support 21 to lock mechanism 62 in place. A knee cushion 28 is mounted on top of bracket 30 for added comfort. Knee cushion 28 is attached to bracket 30 by screws mounted through holes on the bottom of bracket 30. Mechanism 62 is typically positioned behind a user's knee. Strap 20 secures the user's leg against leg support 21 to hold the user's leg in place during use.

Please replace paragraph [0049] with the following amended paragraph:

[0049] Fig. 19 is a perspective view of stretching apparatus 10 with a user 68 seated and strapped in. User 68 is secured onto the device by a chest strap 41, knee straps 20, and foot straps 34. Fig. 20 is a close-up perspective view of the user's leg in stretching apparatus 10, showing leg support 21,

sliding foot mechanism 60, and sliding knee mechanism 62. The user's heel rests comfortably on heel cushion 27. Foot strap 34 holds the user's heel against leg support 21 and the user's foot against foot pedal 23. The user's leg rests comfortable on knee cushion 28. Knee strap 20 holds the leg in position against leg support 21. Sliding foot mechanism 60 and sliding knee mechanism 62 are each secured to leg support 21 by ~~pin~~ pins 37 (only one is visible).

Please replace paragraph [0052] with the following amended paragraph:

[0052] Fig. 23 is a side view of stretching apparatus 10 with a seated user, showing a farther raised leg support 21 and a fully lowered the back support 17. The user is secured onto the device by knee straps 20 and foot straps 34.

Please replace paragraph [0053] with the following amended paragraph:

[0053] Prior to using the invention, the user or assistant would adjust back support 17 and foot pedals 23 to their proper positions, effectively locking them into place. Next the user would sit comfortably on seat 18 and lay his legs on leg supports 21 with feet placed on foot pedals 23. Knee straps 20 would then be wrapped around the legs at the knees and fastened to secure the legs to leg supports 21. Foot straps 34 would then be wrapped around the feet and fastened to secure the feet to foot pedals 23. The user or assistant would then adjust the ~~angle~~ angles of foot pedals 23 to begin stretching the heel cord and the calf muscle. The user or assistant would be able to use the leverage of foot pedals 23 to achieve the desired stretch angle without great strength and maintain a long stretching session by locking in the desired stretch angle with turnbuckle 26.

Please replace paragraph [0055] with the following amended paragraph:

[0055] A hamstring stretch can be combined with a calf stretch. The angle of back support 17 relative to leg supports 21 also creates a calf stretch if the position of sliding foot mechanisms 60 are fixed and the ~~angle~~ angles of foot pedals 23 are locked so that the user's feet push against foot pedals 23 as leg supports 21 are raised. If the user wishes to stretch the hamstring without stretching the calf, then the position of sliding foot mechanism 60 and/or the angle of foot pedals 23 are unlocked.

Please replace paragraph [0058] with the following amended paragraph:

[0058] The daily regiment of stretching can be a tiresome and painful chore. It takes both tremendous amount of strength and time to counter the contractive force of his muscles and to

adequately stretch the muscles and tendons. Stretching apparatus 10 handles both of these requirements. Stretching apparatus 10 is able to counter the contractive forces with ease using the leverage provided by the foot pedal and the leg support. Stretching apparatus 10 is able to provide a long and stable stretch by securing the ropes that set the angle of the leg supports and locking the turnbuckles that set the angle of the foot pedals. This would otherwise not be possible because a therapist or a parent can only hold each stretch for a short duration.

Please replace paragraph [0059] with the following amended paragraph:

[0059] Stretching apparatus 10 has allowed Coby to endure prolonged stretching sessions. While seated in stretching apparatus 10, he can be distracted from the agony of the stretching session by enjoying activities such as watching television, playing games, and/or eating a snack or dessert. The inventor believes that stretching apparatus 10 is an invaluable ~~assets~~ asset for helping Coby to retain flexibility in his legs and will undoubtedly help others with similar neuromuscular disorders.

Please replace paragraph [0061] with the following amended paragraph:

[0061] The muscles should be stretched properly to avoid injury during the stretching exercise itself. The ideal ~~conditions~~ condition for a stretch is when the muscles are relaxed thereby allowing for greater range of motion. The stretch should be in a stable non-bounding (non-bouncing) action to minimize the likelihood of a muscle pull or other injury.